TT3 evolution. They also indicate different stages in the development of the forms. These may be observed in certain museums of arts and crafts which, in some villages, are the sanctuaries where ancestral material is kept. Finally, in numerous ceremonies and in the education of the young, they constitute precious milestones in the history of the Bambara people.

Fishing and Hunting

TT3 226 According to tradition, the fishing net was the first instrument of technology taught men, and fish constituted the primeval food.

"One day, four women went to the shore of the Niger to collect sand which they used for bedding and which also served as food since they no longer received any from the sky. As they advanced, the sand drew back so that they soon found themselves very far from their usual stopping place. They /101/ then wished to return, but Faro prevented them from doing so and asked them to work for him, promising them a precious gift in return. They "swept up the spirit's excrements" for seven days; on the eighth day, "the words began with Faro." He showed them two fishing nets, dyo, and explained to them their manufacture and use. One had very fine loops, dyonyemise (literally, net of the thin eyes), and the other larger loops, dyonyekumba (literally, net with big eyes). Both were made of the fiber of the nyama tree. The first was reserved for tneni (1) fishing, called

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1. Alestes nigrinileatus.

"Faro's excrements," and the second for the capture of larger fish such as sheatfish, gurnard, and catfish.

"For seven days the women were taught by the spirit and his captive; on the eighth day they were liberated. Seven days after these events they began to fish and to nourish themselves with fish.

"But they soon abused the gift they had received. Taking turns day and night, and fishing without interruption at the very place of the revelation, they taxed the spirit's patience. The latter appeared to them above the water, holding his girl twins in his arms; he complained of their harshness, their stupidity, and the weariness they caused him. Reclaiming the secret he had given them, he indicated to them that fishing would hereafter be a man's job and that they would only have the right to sell the fish.

773 226 "Despite their tears, the spirit gave the nets to three men who were present and repeated his teaching. The women left the water's edge while the men turned their new knowledge to account. But at the end of a few days the women became hungry; they went to ask for fish which for seven days was denied them. They then united with the fishermen and the Bozo people were the issue of these first marriages."

At first, fishing was reserved for the Bozo people alone and it was only later that the Bambara learned from the Bozo how to make and manage the fishing nets as well as how to carry out the numerous rites centered around them.

773 226 411 The Bambara practiced hunting and gathering before becoming farmers. It is interesting to compare the fishing net with the sling (ndõfere) now mostly used by children. One of its models (Fig. 7) is

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Fig. 7 — Sling (ndõfere) of the ancient Bambara (Drawing by an informant).

described as having been the most ancient of their weapons of the hunt and war. The central portion of this sling which in reality had the shape of a net /102/ (dyoba, literally, big net) woven from nyama fibers and similar to the one used by fishermen, was drawn out into two thongs. The right one (kinintegere, literally, tegere of the right) ended in a sort of a bouquet of wooden lamellae (tegere), making it easier to hold. The left one (missema, literally, little thing) or numan (literally, left) was free. The man would hold the weapon by both ends, putting stones in the net and "blowing on the right thong to give breath" to the sling. Placing his left foot forward, would twirl it rapidly and let go the left thong, thus releasing the projectiles.

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773 tools and the throwing weapon were made. Then, unfired pottery and weaving were invented; and men finally came to know stone tools, iron and the forge. The technique of making dwellings seems to have developed more slowly.

a. Fishing

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564 Side by side with populations who specialize in the art of fishing, such as the Bozo or the Somono caste, all the Bambara fish in the [96] rivers or watercourses in the neighborhood of their dwellings. A detailed study has been made by J. Daget (1). The Somono, who

1. Jacques Daget, "La pêche dans le delta central du Niger" [Fishing in the Central Delta of the Niger], Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. XIX (1949), No. 1.

are the caste of Bambara fishermen, use traps and nets for fishing; the Bozo remain faithful rather to harpoons and small nets. They are
Ba Bo the ones who almost always make the pirogues, for they alone may enter in rapport with the spirit of the water, Faro. The nets are of
286 227 knotted mesh made with a weaver's shuttle, sia, and a cylindrical mold, pako. The band of the net, as it is being made, is nearly always attached to a wooden bridge especially conceived for this purpose, the kale or dio soyo kala, a regular tetrahedron whose edges
Ba Bo are about 20 centimeters long, one of which is prolonged by a handle 1.50 meters long. The fisherman, seated on the ground, puts the
283 824 bridge before him, keeping the handle close to his leg. The fibers used in netmaking are da (Hibiscus cannabinus), kie (Figna unguiculata), cotton, and now European thread.

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226 The Bozo construct weirs from cut and joined tree branches; the weirs assume several different forms according to the regions and
Bo Ba the snares used. Fish are used for human consumption; they are eaten
251 252 fresh, grilled, fried or boiled, or preserved by smoking or drying. Oil, used for cooking and as a lubricant, is extracted from certain fish, such as the tineni.

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226 Fishing in Bambara villages is done communally under the direction of a fishing chief at the time the waters recede. Precise rules of fishing rights and of rents due the masters of the waters are respected everywhere.